

# 'Nothing But Pluses'

By Charlotte Hays

Vice President Gerald Ford told of rosy prospects for the Republican Party and of his respect for a "great President" yesterday as he, First Lady Pat Nixon and Julie Nixon Eisenhower helped launch a new GOP women's club called Republican Women's Forum.

One might not have known, judging by the remarks at the Capitol Hill Club gathering, that the administration had such problems as Watergate, inflation, an energy crisis and a truckers' strike.

"Nothing but pluses appear to be on the scene," Ford said. "They feel admiration for the President, for Pat, for Julie, for Trix, for David and for Ed."

Mrs. Nixon, who sat on the stage and bowed her head and closed her eyes for the invocation, did not speak.

Ford said that in traveling around the country he had not found "what you detect in some quarters of Washington."

"I'm telling you what the rest of America believes," Ford said. "They feel admiration for the President, for Pat, for Julie, for Trix, for David and for Ed."

"We should look at the White House," Ford continued, "and say we're lucky to be Americans and to have the President and his family there as I know they will continue there with the same fine reputation until January 1977."

Ford also touched on the President's foreign policy successes, but conceded that the administration had "not been able to kick inflation." He said that he had had breakfast with Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz, however, and had come away reassured. As a result, Ford said, he is "enthusiastic that the American farmer has responded and I believe that food as a problem will decrease in 1974."

"You wonder how things could have been better," Ford said. "Well, maybe I'm prejudiced but I think the



By Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

Launching a club, from left: Pat Nixon, Republican National Committee chairman George Bush, Counsellor to the President Anne Armstrong, Vice President Gerald Ford and Julie Nixon Eisenhower.

President could have done better in any one of these years if he'd had a Republican majority in Congress."

After proclaiming 1973 "a

good year by anybody's standards," Ford focused on the future.

"We can surprise those who are saying we are going

to lose in '74," he said. "I think we can accomplish a gain in the House and the Senate on the Republican side."